

ANGUS REID POLITICAL WATCH – JUNE 2008

# Liberals Three Points Behind as Ottawa Heads to Summer Break

*Conservatives remain ahead nationally, but trail in Ontario.*

[VANCOUVER – Jun. 25, 2008] - The governing Conservatives head to the barbecue circuit with a three-point lead over the opposition Liberals, but neither of the two main political leaders has been able to generate positive momentum this month, according to the *Toronto Star* / Angus Reid poll.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,007 adults, 33 per cent of decided voters say they will cast a ballot for the Tories in the next federal election, down one point since May. Support for the Conservative Party is below its share of the actual vote in the January 2006 ballot (36.3%).

The Liberal Party is second with 30 per cent, up three points in a month and exactly the same as its 2006 election total (30.2%). The New Democratic Party (NDP) is third with 19 per cent (+1), followed by the Bloc Québécois with nine per cent (-2), and the Green Party with seven per cent (-1).

The provincial breakdown shows that the Grit advantage over the Tories in Ontario stands at just two points (35% to 33%). In Quebec, the Bloc is still first with 37 per cent, with the Conservatives (25%) and the Liberals (21%) fighting for second place.

The Tories continue to dominate in Alberta (63%) and have surpassed both the Liberals and the NDP in British Columbia. The gender breakdown shows that men (44%) are clearly driving the Tories into the top of Canada's political spectrum, with male voters less willing to back the Grits (24%) or the NDP (15%).

## KEY FINDINGS

- **Voting Intention: Con. 33%, Lib. 30%, NDP 19%, BQ 9%, Grn. 7%**
- **Approval Ratings: Harper 32%, Dion 12%**
- **Preferred Prime Minister: Harper 37%, Dion 10%, Neither 39%**
- **Momentum Score: Harper -19, Dion -26**
- **52% do not want the opposition to force an early election**
- **Harper defeats Dion on eight qualities and characteristics**

Full topline results are at the end of this release

*From June 23 to June 24, 2008 Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,007 adult Canadians. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1 %, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

Among women, the Liberals hold the upper hand (33%), followed by the Conservatives (25%) and the NDP (23%).

#### Approval Ratings, Momentum and Preferred Prime Minister

The approval rating for Stephen Harper (32%) remained unchanged since May, while Stéphane Dion gained two points (12%). Once again, the two main federal party leaders keep a negative momentum score. Harper did not get any bounce from the unprecedented apology to Canada's Aboriginal population, and Dion did marginally better after the introduction of his "Green Shift" proposal.

The Conservative leader's momentum score for the month of June is -19 (10% of respondents say their opinion of the prime minister has improved, while 29% say it has worsened). The Prime Minister's negative momentum almost reached 20 points for the third consecutive month.

The Grit leader's momentum score for the month of April is -26 (9% of respondents say their opinion of Dion has improved, while 35% say it has worsened). While Dion has managed to steer clear of the low momentum score he garnered in March (-32), his numbers have not bounced back dramatically.

The survey also gauged the approval ratings for three other federal party leaders. Three-in-ten Canadians (30%, -4) provide a positive assessment of the job Jack Layton is doing as leader of the NDP. The approval rating for Bloc Québécois leader Giles Duceppe stands at 29 per cent (-13) in Quebec. Green Party leader Elizabeth May gets good marks from 17 per cent of respondents in Canada (-5), but three-in-five (61%) cannot provide an assessment of her performance.

As has been the case throughout 2008, Canadians are not enthused by either of the two main federal party leaders. More than a third of respondents (37%, +4) prefer Harper as Prime Minister, while only 10 per cent (-1) favour Dion. Still, two-in-five Canadians (39%) pick neither man for the job. Harper remains unable to reach the 41 per cent mark he garnered in March 2007.

#### Qualities and Characteristics: Harper vs. Dion

In the poll, respondents were provided with nine qualities and characteristics usually associated with political leaders, and asked to state whether each of them applied to Canada's two main federal party leaders. Harper retains a large lead as being a strong and decisive leader (46% to 10%), having a vision for Canada's future (44% to 29%), managing the economy effectively (40% to 13%), understanding complex issues (40% to 21%), and inspiring confidence (33% to 9%).

However, a third of respondents (34%) think the current prime minister understands the problems of Canadians (21% for Dion), and 29 per cent say Harper generally agrees with them on issues they care about (17% for Dion). The Liberal leader has lost his edge on Harper on one indicator: being honest and trustworthy (32% for Harper, 25% for Dion). Dion only leads Harper as a politician who cares about the environment (43% for Dion, 28% for Harper).

### Minority Government and Early Election

The survey shows virtually no movement on the way Canadians relate to the administration of Stephen Harper. One-in-five respondents (21%) believe the Conservative government has performed well and deserves a majority in the House of Commons, while 29 per cent think the Tories have handled matters adequately and deserve to stay in office with a minority. A third of Canadians (33%) say the Harper administration has performed poorly and does not deserve to form a government after the next election.

When asked whether the opposition parties should try to topple the Conservative minority government, 52 per cent of respondents disagree with forcing an early federal election, while 29 per cent would welcome a nationwide ballot.

### Top Issue Facing Canada

When asked about the most important issue facing the country, Canadians rank health care (22%) as their main concern, followed by the environment (19%) and the economy (19%).

Respondents were also given a list of 13 issues and asked which one would be the most important if an early federal election were to take place this year. Health care was the top option with 20 per cent, followed closely by the national economy with 19 per cent, the environment with 17 per cent, and government accountability with 12 per cent.

Female respondents are more prone to think about health care (25%) as an electoral issue than male respondents (15%), while men are more worried about the national economy (22%) than women (16%).

Only 33 per cent of respondents think Canada is headed in the right track, while 33 per cent (-9) believe the country is off on the wrong track.

The Angus Reid Political Watch is released monthly by Angus Reid Strategies, and includes the following questions:

- Federal Voting Intention
- Approval Rating and Momentum Score for the Prime Minister
- Approval Rating and Momentum Score for the Opposition Leader
- Preferred Prime Minister
- Top Issue Facing Canada
- Right Track / Wrong Track

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### Voting Intention – Liberals Three Points Behind

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 28, 2008	MAR 2, 2008	FEB 2008	2006 Election
Conservative	33%	34%	33%	36%	34%	34%	36.3%
Liberal	30%	27%	30%	26%	28%	31%	30.2%
New Democratic Party	19%	18%	20%	18%	18%	17%	17.5%
Bloc Québécois	9%	11%	8%	9%	10%	9%	10.5%
Green	7%	8%	8%	9%	9%	8%	4.5%
Other	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1.0%

### Voting Intention – Liberals Three Points Behind

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?

	Latest	Provincial Breakdown					
	JUN 2008	BC	Alta.	Prai.	Ont.	Que.	Atl.
Conservative	33%	34%	63%	35%	33%	25%	32%
Liberal	30%	27%	15%	34%	35%	21%	43%
New Democratic Party	19%	26%	10%	23%	20%	14%	24%
Bloc Québécois	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	37%	0%
Green	7%	11%	10%	8%	9%	3%	0%
Other	1%	1%	2%	0%	3%	1%	0%

### Stephen Harper's approval rating at 32%

Do you approve or disapprove of Stephen Harper's performance as Prime Minister?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007	OCT 2007
<b>Approve</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Disapprove</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>27%</b>

### Stephen Harper's momentum score at -19

Over the course of the past month, would you say your opinion of Stephen Harper has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007	OCT 2007
<b>Improved</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Stayed the same</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Worsened</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Momentum Score</b>	<b>-19</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-24</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-10</b>

### Stéphane Dion's approval rating at 12%

Do you approve or disapprove of Stéphane Dion's performance as leader of the opposition?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007	OCT 2007
<b>Approve</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Disapprove</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>43%</b>

### Stéphane Dion's momentum score at -26

Over the course of the past month, would you say your opinion of Stéphane Dion has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007	OCT 2007
<b>Improved</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Stayed the same</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Worsened</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Momentum Score</b>	<b>-26</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-32</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-26</b>

### Approval for Other Party Leaders

Do you approve or disapprove of Jack Layton's performance as leader of the NDP?  
Do you approve or disapprove of Giles Duceppe's performance as leader of the Bloc Québécois?  
Do you approve or disapprove of Elizabeth May's performance as leader of the Green Party?

	Approve	Disapprove	Not sure
<b>Jack Layton</b>	<b>30% (-4)</b>	<b>33% (+2)</b>	<b>37% (+3)</b>
<b>Giles Duceppe [National Sample]</b>	<b>13% (-7)</b>	<b>44% (=)</b>	<b>43% (+7)</b>
<b>Giles Duceppe [Quebec Only]</b>	<b>29% (-13)</b>	<b>44% (+13)</b>	<b>27% (=)</b>
<b>Elizabeth May</b>	<b>17% (-5)</b>	<b>22% (+3)</b>	<b>61% (+2)</b>

### Qualities and Characteristics

Thinking about the following qualities and characteristics, please say whether you think they apply to Stephen Harper? / Stéphane Dion?

	Stephen Harper	Stéphane Dion
Is a strong and decisive leader	<b>46%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Has a vision for Canada's future	<b>44%</b>	<b>29%</b>
Can manage the economy effectively	<b>46%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Understands complex issues	<b>40%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Understands the problems of Canadians	<b>34%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Is honest and trustworthy	<b>32%</b>	<b>25%</b>
Inspires confidence	<b>33%</b>	<b>9%</b>
Generally agrees with you on issues you care about	<b>29%</b>	<b>17%</b>
Cares about the environment	<b>28%</b>	<b>43%</b>

### The Conservative Minority Government

Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?

	JUN 2008	MAY 2008
The Conservative government has performed well, and deserves a majority in the House of Commons	21%	20%
The Conservative government has performed adequately, and deserves to stay in office with a minority	29%	31%
The Conservative government has performed poorly, and does not deserve to form a government after the next election	33%	32%
Not sure	16%	17%

### Appetite for an early election

Do you think the opposition parties should try to topple the Conservative minority government and force an early federal election?

	JUN 2008	MAY 2008
Yes	29%	30%
No	52%	49%
Not sure	19%	21%

### Preferred Prime Minister – Neither

Which of these two leaders would make the best Prime Minister of Canada?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007	OCT 2007
<b>Stephen Harper</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Stéphane Dion</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Neither</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>14%</b>

### Canada on the right track for 34%

Overall, do you think Canada is headed in the right track, or the wrong track?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007	OCT 2007
<b>Right track</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Wrong track</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>29%</b>

### Health Care, Environment and Economy are top issues

Q. What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?

	JUN 2008	MAY 2008	APR 2008
Health Care	22%	22%	25%
Environment	19%	19%	21%
Economy	19%	15%	16%
Poverty	8%	9%	11%
Energy / Electricity	8%	7%	2%
Tax relief	5%	7%	4%
Crime	5%	5%	5%
Ethics / Accountability	5%	4%	4%
Afghanistan	2%	3%	4%
Unemployment	2%	2%	3%
Education	1%	2%	2%
Terrorism	1%	1%	2%
National Unity	1%	1%	1%
Or, some other issue	3%	3%	2%

## Health Care is top electoral issue

Q. If an early federal election were to take place this year, which one of the following issues would be the most important when you cast your vote?

	Total	Gender	
		Men	Women
<b>Health Care</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>The national economy</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>The environment</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Government accountability</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Tax relief</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Leadership</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>The mission in Afghanistan</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Financial help for cities</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Child care</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Senate reform</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Crime</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Gas prices</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Poverty</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>

*Angus Reid Strategies is a full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995.*

*Angus Reid Strategies, along with its sister company, Vision Critical, is now the largest Canadian-owned market research enterprise. In addition to its four offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices San Francisco, New York and London, England. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.*

*Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel ([www.angusreidforum.com](http://www.angusreidforum.com)), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.*

*Over the last year, Angus Reid has covered five elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes. <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=194>*

*More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>*

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our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:  
[www.angusreidstrategies.com](http://www.angusreidstrategies.com)**